

WI-357  
Sharptown Firemen's Carnival Grounds  
Sharptown  
Private

1936 and later

One of the principal yearly events in northern Wicomico County is the opening of the Sharptown Firemen's Carnival, which has operated in this river town since 1926.

According to an article written in the *Salisbury Times* in 1958,

*Most Eastern Shore towns have had a carnival but Sharptown determined to have the best one. It was started in 1926, and grounds were purchased and permanent buildings erected in 1936 and onward. The fire company owns also all its own carnival equipment, such as rides and games. This elaborate set up soon became famous, and the Sharptown Carnival soon drew capacity crowds year in and year out.*

The carnival grounds mark the southern entrance into Sharptown. Standing at the front gate is a metal Ferris wheel. The complex of concrete block and frame buildings is dominated by a pair of distinctive octagonal pavilions. The east pavilion houses an antique carousel of carved wooden animals and painted panels. Rows of concrete block and frame concession stands are located on the north and south sides of these centrally sited structures.

## MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Sharptown Firemens' Carnival Grounds

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-357

## MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s):     Architecture  
   Entertainment

2. Geographic Orientation:       Eastern Shore

3. Chronological/Development Period(s):   Modern Period     1930-

4. Resource Type(s):                   Carnival complex

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-357  
Magi No.  
DOE   yes   no

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Sharptown Firemen's<sup>4</sup> Carnvial Grounds

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number Main Street (MD 348) and Joe Morgan Road    not for publication

city, town Sharptown    vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u>  </u> agriculture <u>  </u> museum
<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial <u>  </u> park
<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<u>  </u> educational <u>  </u> private residence
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <u>  </u> religious
<u>  </u> object	<u>  </u> in process	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government <u>  </u> scientific
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial <u>  </u> transportation
	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military <u>  </u> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sharptown Fire Company

street & number Main Street telephone no.:

city, town Sharptown state and zip code Maryland 21861

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date    federal    state    county    local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. WI-357

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Sharptown Firemen's Carnival Grounds are located on the east side of Main Street (MD 348) at the intersection of Joe Morgan Road at the south end of Sharptown, Wicomico County, Maryland.

The carnival grounds are distinguished by two large octagonal pavilions erected during the mid to late 1930s. Centrally positioned in the complex, the east pavilion houses a carousel while the west pavilion is used for games. Flanking the two pavilions on the north and south sides are ranges of single story frame and concrete block concession stands. Located at the entrance to the complex is a small Ferris wheel.

The two octagonal pavilions are supported on concrete block foundation and are sheathed with vertical board siding. On each face of the game pavilion a hinged door drops on bracket support to serve as a playing surface in front of wood benches that encircle the building. The octagonal shaped roof slopes upward toward an octagonal cupola also topped by an octagonal roof. There are louvered vents in each face of the octagonal cupola. The edges of the roof are finished with exposed rafter ends and open soffits.

The east pavilion houses an early twentieth century carousel of carved wooden animals resting on a wooden platform. The center pivot and drive mechanisms are hidden by an painted scenic panels. The ceiling is open to the cupola with an exposed rafter system.

On the north and south sides of the octagonal pavilions are orderly rows of single story frame and concrete block concession stands. Largely erected during the mid to late twentieth century, the concession stands are covered by low pitched gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles. The roofs of the concessions stands have wide eaves that extend well beyond the frame or concrete walls. Hinged board doors or more recent metal tambour doors enclose the concession stands.

Distinguishing the Main Street entrance is a metal Ferris wheel.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. WI-357

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) entertainment

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

One of the principal yearly events in northern Wicomico County is the opening of the Sharptown Firemen's Carnival, which has operated in this river town since 1926. According to an article written in the *Salisbury Times* in 1958,

*Most Eastern Shore towns have had a carnival but Sharptown determined to have the best one. It was started in 1926, and grounds were purchased and permanent buildings erected in 1936 and onward. The fire company owns also all its own carnival equipment, such as rides and games. This elaborate set up soon became famous, and the Sharptown Carnival soon drew capacity crowds year in and year out.<sup>1</sup>*

The carnival grounds mark the southern entrance into Sharptown. Standing at the front gate is a metal Ferris wheel. The complex of concrete block and frame buildings is dominated by a pair of distinctive octagonal pavilions. The east pavilion houses an antique carousel of carved wooden animals and painted panels. Rows of concrete block and frame concession stands are located on the north and south sides of these centrally sited structures.

Due to the architectural and historic merit of this complex it deserves listing in Category A.

<sup>1</sup> *The Salisbury Times*, Evening Edition, June 14, 1958.



and buildings, to a point of good ambulance. Through a wise use of their funds they have housed industry for the town.

John R. Owens is president and assistant chief, and Charles Walker is chief. Mr. Owens said the growth of the company is not accidental, but happened only through the dedication and hard work of its members. Belonging to the fire company has been a tradition in Sharptown since the memory of the oldest grandfather, but what really established the Sharptown company's strength was its carnival.

**MOST EASTERN** Shore towns have had a carnival, but Sharptown determined to have the best one. It was started in 1926, and grounds were purchased and permanent buildings erected in 1936 and onward. The fire company owns also all its own carnival equipment, such as rides and games. This elaborate set-up soon became famous, and the Sharptown Carnival soon drew capacity crowds year in and year out.

The carnival has brought the fire company about \$10,000 in annual revenue yearly. It has meant weeks of hard work for the members, but the firemen knew it has been worthwhile when they see what it has purchased.

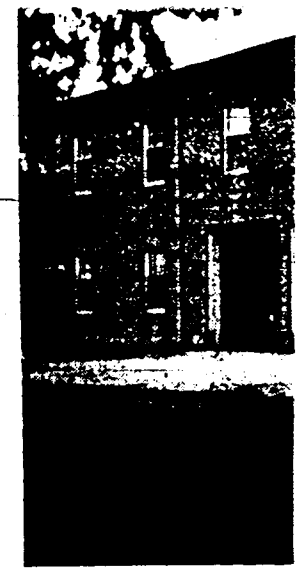
The present company, buildings and equipment are worth about \$75,000, and the carnival grounds, buildings, and equipment could not be replaced for another \$75,000. When one starts to consider that the Wicomico County allowance per town for fire equipment is only \$2,000 yearly, it is understandable why the Sharptown Fire Co. has pushed its carnival.

President Owens said that the Sharptown company could not maintain its present high standard of operations without the income from this source. He brought up a recent controversy over bingo games and raffles and said that these games were the chief revenue producers of the carnival. He said, "Let the fire companies have their carnivals with their bingo games and raffles. If this money is not coming to us in this manner, it will have to come directly in taxes, and directly out of the pockets of you taxpayers. It is unthinkable that our homes and our farms should be without modern fire protection, and we certainly can not provide this protection on the present county allowance."

attract good personnel.

The Sharptown Fire Co. serves an area bounded on the west into Dorchester County, and into Gales-town on the north into Delaware toward Laurel, then halfway to Mardela, and on past Double Mills. It takes any member over 21 from that area.

The Sharptown Fire Co. has been as effective with its check book as it has with its pum-pers in maintaining the wellbeing of the community. They erected the present building occupied by the Hebron Mfg. Co. and purchased land to attract the pickle plant of Cross and Blackwell. They have purchased, and resold considerable other local real estate in passing years. They say that they are in complete agreement with the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and the local city government in attracting new industry, and have an open mind in work-



Sharptown Fire Co. has

## Sharptown Legion Po

The Sharptown Post of the all local and county de- American Legion is a vital grow- donations and personnel. About five dances a w-

ing organization with a membership of 83 men and 65 in the Ladies Auxiliary. It is a rather new post, being organized in December, 1946, with 30 members under Cmdr. Garman Mann.

For the first five years of its existence the American Legion had no real home of its own, but in 1951 it took the plunge and bought a large, comfortable frame home at the edge of town. This has been constantly remodeled, and in 1953 a large addition was built on the rear of the property.

On the ground floor, the home has a game room with pool table, a large social room with tables and chairs and floor space ample for dancing, and a modern kitchen.

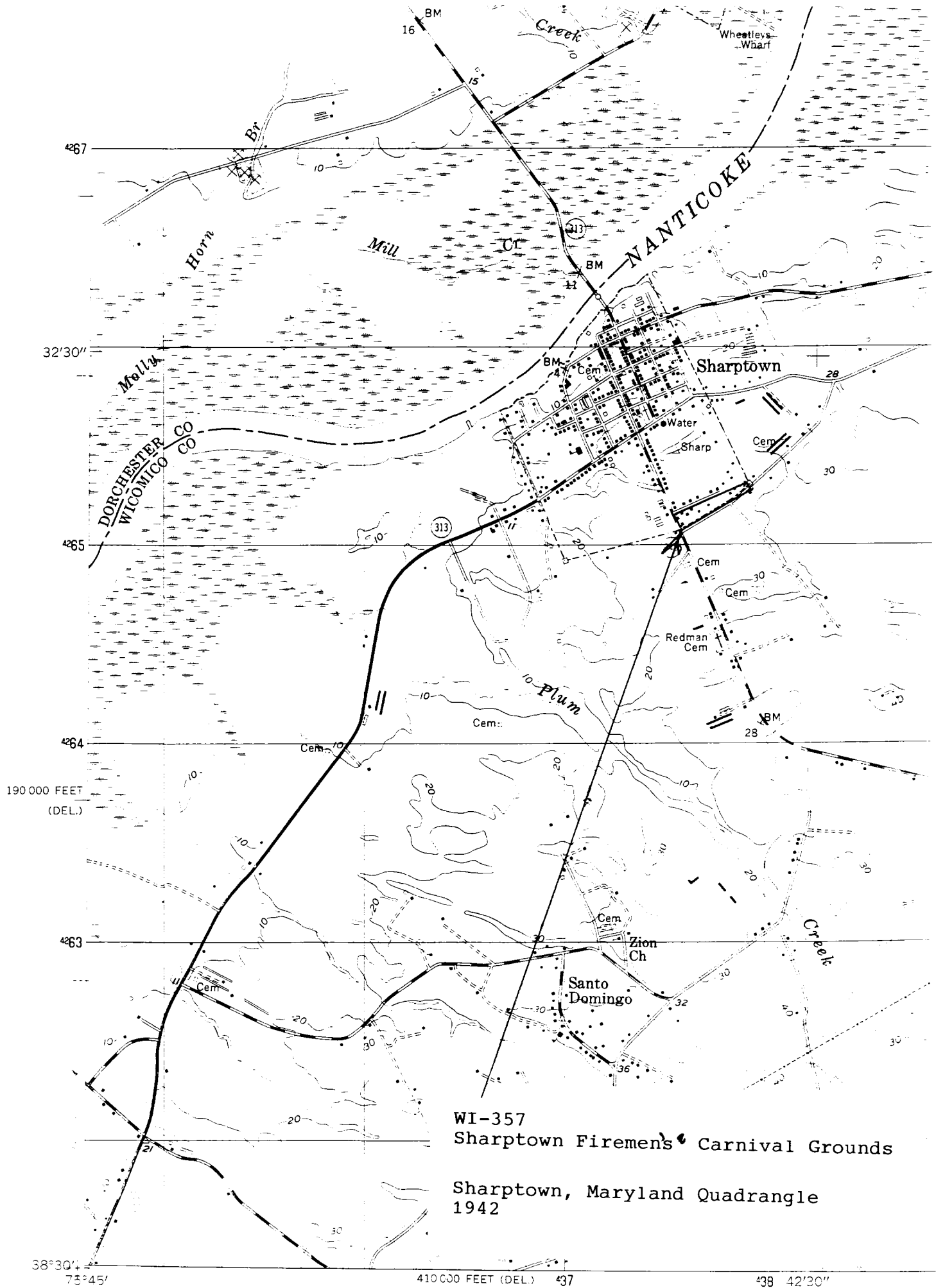
**THIS PROPERTY** is now completely paid for.

Present officers are: Thomas Black, commander; Donald K. Wan, first vice commander; Robert Bennett, second vice commander; Arthur Henry, president; and William Kennedy, treasurer.

The legion sponsors a boys' baseball team in the Junior League, Lenon Baseball League, for five for five years. The legion is Eastern Shore, and is in the 1946.

The Legion also participates in





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Sharptown, Maryland Quadrangle  
1942